



## protein C deficiency

Protein C deficiency is a disorder that increases the risk of developing abnormal blood clots; the condition can be mild or severe.

Individuals with mild protein C deficiency are at risk of a type of blood clot known as a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). These clots occur in the deep veins of the arms or legs, away from the surface of the skin. A DVT can travel through the bloodstream and lodge in the lungs, causing a life-threatening blockage of blood flow known as a pulmonary embolism (PE). While most people with mild protein C deficiency never develop abnormal blood clots, certain factors can add to the risk of their development. These factors include increased age, surgery, inactivity, or pregnancy. Having another inherited disorder of blood clotting in addition to protein C deficiency can also influence the risk of abnormal blood clotting.

In severe cases of protein C deficiency, infants develop a life-threatening blood clotting disorder called purpura fulminans soon after birth. Purpura fulminans is characterized by the formation of blood clots in the small blood vessels throughout the body. These blood clots block normal blood flow and can lead to localized death of body tissue (necrosis). Widespread blood clotting uses up all available blood clotting proteins. As a result, abnormal bleeding occurs in various parts of the body, which can cause large, purple patches on the skin. Individuals who survive the newborn period may experience recurrent episodes of purpura fulminans.

### Frequency

Mild protein C deficiency affects approximately 1 in 500 individuals. Severe protein C deficiency is rare and occurs in an estimated 1 in 4 million newborns.

### Genetic Changes

Protein C deficiency is caused by mutations in the *PROC* gene. This gene provides instructions for making protein C, which is found in the bloodstream and is important for controlling blood clotting. Protein C blocks the activity of (inactivates) certain proteins that promote blood clotting.

Most of the mutations that cause protein C deficiency change single protein building blocks (amino acids) in protein C, which disrupts its ability to control blood clotting. Individuals with this condition do not have enough functional protein C to inactivate clotting proteins, which results in the increased risk of developing abnormal blood clots. Protein C deficiency can be divided into type I and type II based on how mutations in the *PROC* gene affect protein C. Type I is caused by *PROC* gene mutations that result in reduced levels of protein C, while type II is caused by *PROC* gene mutations

that result in the production of an altered protein C with reduced activity. Both types of mutations can be associated with mild or severe protein C deficiency; the severity is determined by the number of *PROC* gene mutations an individual has.

## **Inheritance Pattern**

Protein C deficiency is inherited in an autosomal dominant pattern, which means one altered copy of the *PROC* gene in each cell is sufficient to cause mild protein C deficiency. Individuals who inherit two altered copies of this gene in each cell have severe protein C deficiency.

## **Other Names for This Condition**

- hereditary thrombophilia due to protein C deficiency
- *PROC* deficiency

## **Diagnosis & Management**

### Genetic Testing

- Genetic Testing Registry: Thrombophilia, hereditary, due to protein C deficiency, autosomal dominant  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/gtr/conditions/C2674321/>

### Other Diagnosis and Management Resources

- MedlinePlus Encyclopedia: Congenital Protein C or S Deficiency  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000559.htm>
- MedlinePlus Encyclopedia: Necrosis  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002266.htm>
- MedlinePlus Encyclopedia: Protein C  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003659.htm>
- MedlinePlus Encyclopedia: Purpura  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003232.htm>

### General Information from MedlinePlus

- Diagnostic Tests  
<https://medlineplus.gov/diagnostictests.html>
- Drug Therapy  
<https://medlineplus.gov/drugtherapy.html>
- Genetic Counseling  
<https://medlineplus.gov/geneticcounseling.html>

- Palliative Care  
<https://medlineplus.gov/palliativecare.html>
- Surgery and Rehabilitation  
<https://medlineplus.gov/surgeryandrehabilitation.html>

## **Additional Information & Resources**

### MedlinePlus

- Encyclopedia: Congenital Protein C or S Deficiency  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000559.htm>
- Encyclopedia: Necrosis  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002266.htm>
- Encyclopedia: Protein C  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003659.htm>
- Encyclopedia: Purpura  
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003232.htm>
- Health Topic: Blood Clots  
<https://medlineplus.gov/bloodclots.html>
- Health Topic: Deep Vein Thrombosis  
<https://medlineplus.gov/deepveinthrombosis.html>
- Health Topic: Pulmonary Embolism  
<https://medlineplus.gov/pulmonaryembolism.html>

### Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center

- Protein C deficiency  
<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/4521/protein-c-deficiency>

### Additional NIH Resources

- National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: Deep Vein Thrombosis  
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dvt/>
- National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: Pulmonary Embolism  
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/pe/>

## Educational Resources

- Disease InfoSearch: Thrombophilia, hereditary, due to protein c deficiency, autosomal dominant  
<http://www.diseaseinfosearch.org/Thrombophilia%2C+hereditary%2C+due+to+protein+c+deficiency%2C+autosomal+dominant/9396>
- Disease InfoSearch: Thrombophilia, hereditary, due to protein c deficiency, autosomal recessive  
<http://www.diseaseinfosearch.org/Thrombophilia%2C+hereditary%2C+due+to+protein+c+deficiency%2C+autosomal+recessive/9397>
- MalaCards: protein c deficiency  
[http://www.malacards.org/card/protein\\_c\\_deficiency](http://www.malacards.org/card/protein_c_deficiency)
- Merck Manual Home Edition for Patients and Caregivers: Thrombophilia  
<http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/blood-disorders/excessive-clotting/excessive-clotting>
- Orphanet: Hereditary thrombophilia due to congenital protein C deficiency  
[http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/OC\\_Exp.php?Lng=EN&Expert=745](http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/OC_Exp.php?Lng=EN&Expert=745)

## Patient Support and Advocacy Resources

- National Blood Clot Alliance  
<https://www.stoptheclot.org/>

## ClinicalTrials.gov

- ClinicalTrials.gov  
<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=%22protein+C+deficiency%22>

## Scientific Articles on PubMed

- PubMed  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%28Protein+C+Deficiency%5BMAJR%5D%29+AND+%28protein+C+deficiency%5BTIAB%5D%29+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+human%5Bmh%5D+AND+%22last+1080+days%22%5Bdp%5D>

## OMIM

- THROMBOPHILIA DUE TO PROTEIN C DEFICIENCY, AUTOSOMAL DOMINANT  
<http://omim.org/entry/176860>
- THROMBOPHILIA DUE TO PROTEIN C DEFICIENCY, AUTOSOMAL RECESSIVE  
<http://omim.org/entry/612304>

## Sources for This Summary

- Brouwer JL, Lijfering WM, Ten Kate MK, Kluin-Nelemans HC, Veeger NJ, van der Meer J. High long-term absolute risk of recurrent venous thromboembolism in patients with hereditary deficiencies of protein S, protein C or antithrombin. *Thromb Haemost.* 2009 Jan;101(1):93-9. *Citation on PubMed:* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19132194>
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*Free article on PubMed Central:* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2721356/>
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Reprinted from Genetics Home Reference:

<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/protein-c-deficiency>

Reviewed: May 2013

Published: March 21, 2017

Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications  
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National Institutes of Health  
Department of Health & Human Services